For-Hire Survey Meeting Minutes
Ocean City, MD
May 23, 2005

1) Discussion of summary data:
   a. What about confidentiality? LPS asks anglers to provide fishing grounds and lat/long while MRFSS only asks for area (EEZ, ocean <3 and inland). DE captain also raised the issue of data confidentiality in general and was concerned that "foreigners" could access the data.
      i. *Raw data can only be retrieved through a FOIA request. Personal identifiers (name, phone number, address) are generally stripped out of the datasets and are not released to the public.*
   b. Question came up as to why we ask the "target species" question. Captains said target is meaningless. Why not ask catch? Several captains suggested that the for-hire survey loses credibility because they don't ask for catch information from the captains. Recall of catch data on the phone is a problem with anglers but may not be with captains since they have their written trip reports that they can reference.
      i. *Target species is used for economic valuation studies. Collecting catch data over the phone would take a long time and OMB limits the length of the phone calls with captains. There has been some discussion about having captains enter catch data voluntarily via the internet, or piloting the collection of catch data in one state (ideally where there is little species variability).*
   c. DE captain said household income question really offended some people on the intercept survey.
      i. *This is only conducted once every three years, though income questions are known to be a particularly sensitive subject to respondents. These data are used to help determine the economic value of the recreational fishery.*

2) Respondent Burden:
   a. Too much overall reporting burden for captains doing both VTRs and For-Hire Survey. Several other people commented about the "double-dipping" problem of having to report the same information two or more times. Another captain said that while the VTRs must be filled out as a condition for permit renewal, the for-hire survey has no "clout" or hammer to deal with non-compliance.
   b. DE captain asked if there is a number where they can call to report their data at their convenience or set up a time to be called back.
      i. *This already exists. The contractor maintains a toll-free number for captains to call to initiate an interview or set up a convenient time: 1-800-229-5220.*
   c. Internet is felt by some to not be secure. Also, captains should be able to set user name and password. You could notify them by email that they have been selected.
   d. Need "receipt" for web survey – printout of reported information. Many captains mail in VTRs via certified mail so they have confirmation of receipt.

e.   NOAA Fisheries Service uses MD logbook data for MD bay boats who report through the state logbook program. Boats who report 100 of their fishing through the MD logbook program are exempt from FHS. One captain thought that the MD logbook response rates reported were too low. He said that they get a "nasty-gram" if they don't get their logbooks in and that filling these out is mandatory if you want to renew your permit. A state representative conceded that enforcement is not that strict, particularly when it comes to timeliness.

3) Timely estimates:
   a.   Comment about the need to give something back to the captains for participating. Captain buy-in is the best achieved by giving them information that they can use.
   b.   One MD captain stated how directly useful these data are to them and their businesses (state of residence for dockside interviews, target species as stated by angler). He said they greatly appreciate this type of information.
   c.   Captains want to see catch data presented.
        i.   *FHS effort was not used for the 2004 catch estimates. 2004 catch estimates are available on the web: <www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/recreational>. NOAA Fisheries Service intends to use FHS effort in 2005 estimates.*
   d.   Communicate that the FHS is replacing MRFSS and you will get 100 percent participation (lower refusals).
   e.   MD captain said artificial reef data should be tracked. We need to give managers this information.